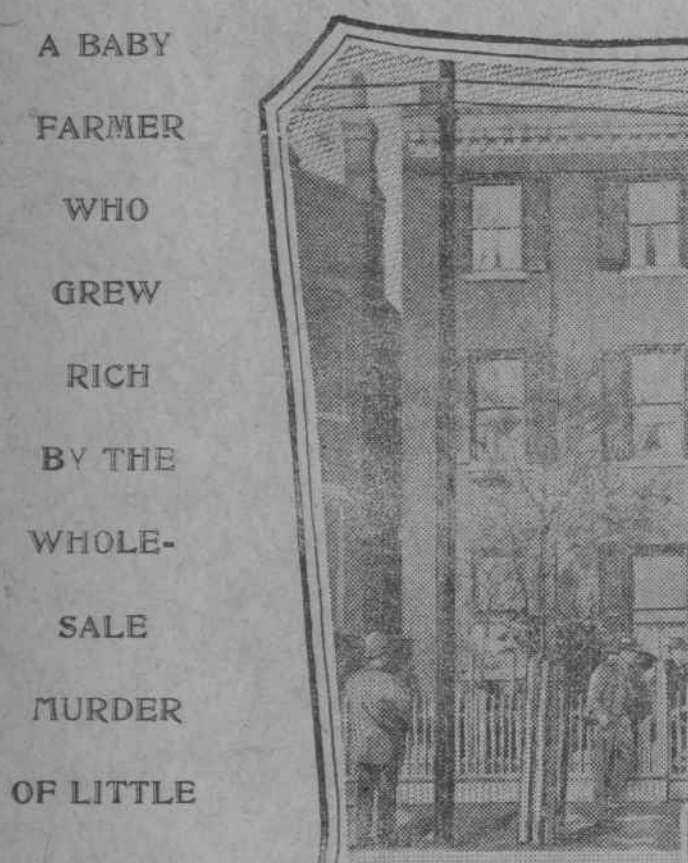


# 300 MURDERED CHILDREN FOUND IN THIS HOUSE OF DEATH.

A BABY  
FARMER  
WHO  
GREW  
RICH  
BY THE  
WHOLE-  
SALE  
MURDER  
OF LITTLE  
INNO-  
CENTS.

SHE  
FILLED  
THEM  
WITH  
COAL OIL  
AND  
BURNED  
THEM UP  
IN A  
FURNACE.



THE HOUSE OF DEATH  
919 CHOUTEAU AVE  
ST. LOUIS



HOW  
IDA ZIMMERMAN'S  
BODY WAS CARRIED  
AWAY IN A TRUNK



Bones from the Cellar Graves, and Jewelry  
of Some of the Victims.

THE police of St. Louis have discovered a house of death, whose horrors seem beyond belief and description. This house is situated at No. 919 Chouteau avenue, St. Louis.

It was kept by Mrs. Henrietta Bamberger, a lady farmer. She took charge of the children of poor parents, who troubled no further about them.

According to one witness, not less than three hundred infants died in the house and the bodies of most of them were buried in the cellar. Some witnesses place the number of victims even higher than this, but whatever it may be the police declare that it will be appalling.

Mrs. Bamberger has already been indicted for four crimes—for murder in the first degree and for manslaughter in the first degree on three separate occasions.

The charge of murder in the first degree is based on the strangling in 1895 of an infant of tender age, sex and parentage unknown, whose body was burned in a furnace.

The charges of manslaughter in the first degree relate to the deaths of Mary Holkamp, on February 13, 1896; of Ida Zimmermann, on March 3, 1896, and of Lydia Bressert, on September 10, 1897.

Mrs. Bamberger's house was also a private hospital, and many grown-up persons died there under circumstances which throw grave suspicion upon her.

The St. Louis police declare that they have caught in Mrs. Bamberger a criminal infinitely more depraved and monstrous than Holmes.

The testimony on which the indictments were found was given by women formerly employed by Mrs. Bamberger as servants or nurses. Their testimony has already been confirmed by the discovery of some of the remains and of articles of jewelry and clothing belonging to the dead.

The first clue to the crimes of Mrs. Bamberger was obtained by the authorities while they were prosecuting a swindler named McDermott. He was found to have had dealings with the baby farmer.

Circuit Attorney Theodore C. Eggers and Assistant Circuit Attorney Samuel D. Hodgson have been in charge of the legal conduct of the case, while the police work has been in the hands of Detectives Lilly and Harrington. Their investigations have been carried on for six months, and have been attended with the greatest difficulty, on account of the cunning and secrecy of Mrs. Bamberger and her influential friends, among whom, it is said, there is a high official of the Police Department. Now that the case has at last been made public, it has caused a profound sensation of horror in St. Louis, a sensation that is likely to spread to the whole country.

The chief witness of the prosecution is Lizzie Rieger, who was employed as a servant by Mrs. Bamberger. She declares that she saw five babies burned in one day. She believes that hundreds of children she did not see were destroyed in the same way. The other important witnesses are Mary Haas, Kate Bleckinger and Mary Miller.

The murder of the child in 1895 was described by Lizzie Rieger and other witnesses as a most horrible and deliberate crime.

"The child," said one witness, "was strong and healthy, and cried loudly for food. Mrs. Bamberger said that she had had enough of that, and that she would soon stop its crying."

"Some time after midnight on the day on which the child died, Mrs. Bamberger took the child and drowned it in a big bath tub. I saw all this through the keyhole. I could hear the bubbling of the child's breath through the water while it was drowning. I could not have got in, for the door was locked, and, anyway, I was afraid for my life of uttering a sound."

"Afterward, Mrs. Bamberger filled the body with coal oil and bound it up in rags, which she also soaked with oil. Then she put it in a great furnace which she kept principally for this purpose. There it was burned up practically to nothing."

"She did not let us see what she had in the furnace, but she did not care very much, for she had us thoroughly terrorized. We were afraid of her for two reasons. She told us that if we revealed anything we saw she would punish us herself in some terrible way, and we knew what dreadful

things she could do. She also told us that if we saw anything for which she could be punished we should be punished just as much as she, because we were all accomplices and all in the same boat."

"Hundreds of children were disposed of by Mrs. Bamberger in the way I have described. When there was anything left of the bodies she would burn it in the cellar or carry it away and dispose of it in some other way she knew of."

"The older and bigger children were the more likely to be there to be something left of the calcined bones after the bodies had been burned."

"The children were usually taken to the top floor and kept in the room on the side of the house next to the yard. Their cries could not be heard by anybody. The walls were thick and the windows were thickly padded around the frames."

"I saw five babies burned up in one day. Hundreds of others must have suffered the same fate, for she had been doing the same thing for years. I do not believe they will ever find out the whole truth about these horrible crimes."

According to this witness, a woman named Lydia Bressert died from brutal treatment at the hands of Mrs. Bamberger in September, 1897. When the girl died Mrs. Bamberger tied her arms across her chest, with a rope. She then told Lizzie Rieger to get out of the house and stay away for two days.

When the nurse came back she began a search to find out what had become of the dead woman. At last she sneaked into the cellar of the stable, and there she found the traces of a newly made grave. There was a small mound freshly turned over. Out of this stuck two pieces of rope, similar to that which Mrs. Bamberger had used in tying the hands of the dead woman.

Lizzie Rieger and her fellow nurse were horror-stricken, but they were afraid to say anything to the police, for Mrs. Bamberger had threatened them with terrible punishment if they ever said anything about what happened in her house.

When Lydia Bressert knew that she was dying she gave several articles to the nurses, among them a thin gold chain with a locket attached and a gold chain with a blue stone. These have been turned over to Circuit Attorney Eggers.

Detective Lilly obtained a photograph of Lydia Bressert from her parents, and in it could be identified the various articles of jewelry which have been found.

The burial of Ida Zimmermann, as related by Lizzie Rieger, was a ghastly affair. This woman, who came from Marine, Ill., died in October, 1894, in Mrs. Bamberger's house. When she was dying she asked that her brother should be sent for, but Mrs. Bamberger answered, fearfully, that she would soon be beyond the need of a brother.

The nurses say that the dead body lay neglected for a day and a night. On the following day Mrs. Bamberger dressed the girl in the clothes she had formerly worn and then placed the body in a sitting position in a trunk. At night an express wagon came and the trunk was loaded on it.

The wagon drove away. A few minutes later Mrs. Bamberger went out and did not return until the next morning. The nurses afterward learned that Mrs. Bamberger joined the wagon and drove with it as far as a bridge over the Meramec River, near Luxembourg. Here the man lifted the trunk out of the wagon, but then he became frightened and refused to finish the ghastly work he had undertaken to do.

Mrs. Bamberger thereupon opened the trunk, dragged out the body, hauled it to the railing of the bridge and pitched it over into the river. She is an extremely powerful woman, of the type of Mrs. Nick.

The body was afterward found on the bank of the river, and an inquest held, at which a verdict of suicide was given.

After the first revelations were made by Lizzie Rieger and her fellow servants, the police began to hunt for the expressman who had carried Mrs. Bamberger and the trunk on that dreadful night. When he was arrested and questioned he made the following confession:

"My name is Octave Didier, and I have lived at No. 1638 Ohio avenue for five years. I do a carting business, and my stand has been at Fourth and Chouteau, which was lighted up brilliantly."

"A servant called for me at my business place, between 5 and 6 o'clock, on an afternoon in March, 1896. The night was dark when I reached the house, and I was given some whiskey which I have reason to believe was drugged. I was driving a bay horse, and my wagon was a closed one. In the hallway, while I was carrying down the trunk, were two women."

"Mrs. Bamberger was also there. One of the women gave me \$3, and the other one got into my wagon with Mrs. Bamberger."

"The route we took to the Meramec River was through Carondelet and over the bridge across the River Des Peres, nearest the Meramec. When we came to the Meramec, Mrs. Bamberger asked me to stop, and said she would get some person to carry the trunk the rest of the way to the place where she wanted it to go. At this point the trunk was lifted from the wagon by Mrs. Bamberger and the other woman. My horse's nose was just about on the north end of the bridge that crosses the river when this was done. I never saw the trunk after I drove the horse and wagon down the road to the first turning place."

"On my return to the bridge I found Mrs. Bamberger and her companion standing in the same spot where I had left them. They climbed into the wagon. I drove them back into the city. When we arrived at Jefferson and Lafayette avenues Mrs. Bamberger and the other woman got out. She said she was through with me. I remember the place, because it was right near the Union Club house, which was lighted up brilliantly."

Several times I have taken trunks to Mrs. Bamberger's from the various places where she has lived. It was during the Spring of 1896 that I removed a trunk from No. 919 Chouteau avenue to the Meramec River.

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"I also well remember the occurrence because it was very late when I got home that night, and my wife quarrelled with me because of my delay."

It is further stated Didier has confessed that he knew there was a human body in the trunk. He saw that it was covered with a red calico wrapper. This corresponds with the description of the body found on the banks of the Meramec River.

The murder house is a dingy brick building three stories high on the north side of Chouteau avenue. The neighbors had long regarded it with horror and curiosity. It stands back some feet from the sidewalk and has a side entrance. The yard at the rear is covered over, to form a shed, and alongside this is the stable.

Five laborers from the Poorhouse were employed by the police to excavate the cellar of the stable. Lizzie Rieger watched them and told them where to dig.

The cellar had been covered with a floor of cement since the night the nurse saw evidences of a new made grave. After this had been removed the workmen found a thin layer of earth. Having dug through this they came upon unmistakable evidences of a grave. At a depth of 2 feet the dimensions of the grave were clearly defined by reason of the formation of the earth, which had been used to fill it. The grave was 4 feet in length by 20 inches in width and 3 feet 10 inches deep. It ran north and south, close to the west wall of the cellar, about 5 feet from the entrance, and directly over the spot indicated by Lizzie Rieger.

When once the workmen were satisfied

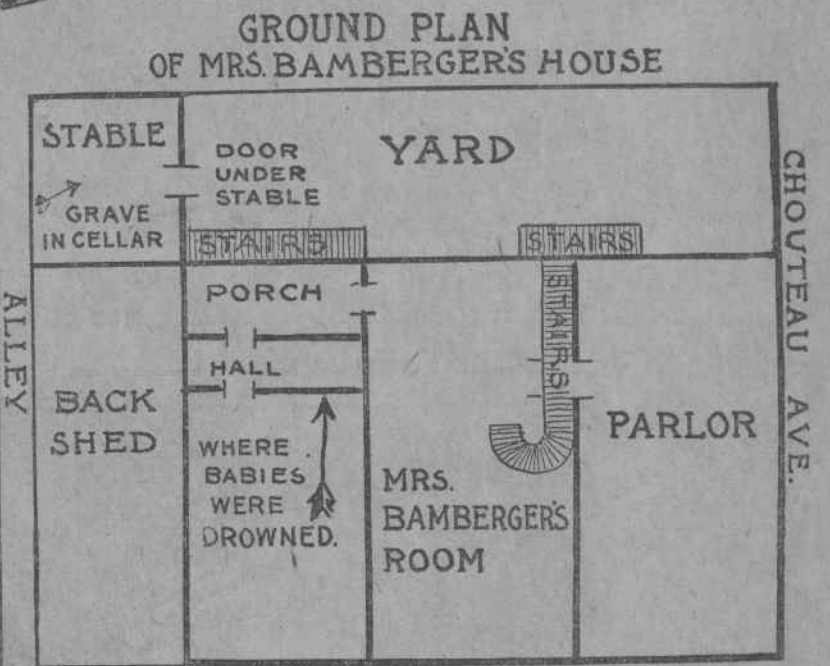
that they were on the right scent, they worked industriously, and within a short while had reached the bottom of the grave. There was little need to tell when the bottom was reached. Their spades sunk into a soft mass of dark, slimy ooze. Mixed with the ooze were particles of a substance resembling chalky lime. In the clods of earth upturned from the spades were a few stringy wisps of hair. At length the diggers announced that they had reached the bottom of the excavation and a halt was called.

Circuit Attorney Eggers was notified of the find, and he hurried over from the Four Courts. He closely examined the excavation that had been made, and, after satisfying himself that it was the site of a former excavation, he ordered the detectives to obtain samples of the material which had been excavated. A couple of tin boxes, about a foot cube, were obtained from a grocery store, and filled with the material, which was then taken possession of by the Circuit Attorney, to be used for evidence. At his direction, also, Photographer Baker, of the Police Department, made a photograph of the excavation and surroundings.

Having accomplished the purpose for which the search of the cellar was instituted, the Circuit Attorney dismissed the Poorhouse laborers, and the premises were once more turned over to the occupants of the house.

The Circuit Attorney expressed the utmost satisfaction at the result of the search of the cellar.

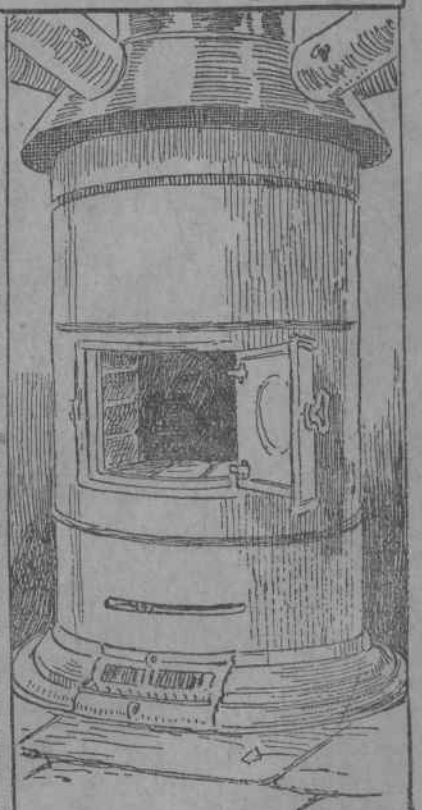
"There cannot be the slightest doubt," he said, "that the excavation made by the laborers uncovered the grave, mentioned by Lizzie Rieger in her testimony, used as a depository for the body of Lydia Bressert. Every indication that a human body had been buried therein was present. I have officiated at the exhumation of numerous bodies after they had been buried a long time, and know the signs well. The slimy ooze at the bottom, in my opinion, is the residue of a human body which has decomposed through the aid of chemicals. The whitish, chalky formation found may be a portion of the chemical compound used for disintegrating the body, which has become



GROUND PLAN  
OF MRS. BAMBERGER'S HOUSE



The Police Searching the Yard for Evidences of Crime.



The Store in Which the Bodies of the  
Child Victims Were Destroyed.

Incorporated with the substance of the body and undergone a chemical change, giving it its present appearance. The presence of a quantity of water at the bottom of the excavation adds strength to my opinion, as water is almost always found at the bottom of graves."

The search for other remains of the victims of Mrs. Bamberger still goes on, but the police declare that they have already evidence enough to convict her of the most horrible list of crimes known in modern times.

## HOW AN OLD WORLD ART IS BEING REVIVED.

TWO young American women of Bos-studies in Venice they were much impressed by the beauty of the gilded leather in some of the old palaces, and gradually they were led to investigate the methods that had produced it. They found that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gilded leather was one of the chief industries of Spain, where it had been introduced at least three hundred years before by the Moors. It is therefore undoubtedly of African origin. From Spain the art spread to France

and Italy, while the making of "Cordovan leather," as it was called, is said to have been one of the chief sources of wealth in the Netherlands. This art, like other old arts, degenerated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In its last days both materials and workmanship were often cheap and inferior. In the present century practically no leather of this kind has been produced, and it has remained for these two young American women to show its possibilities in modern schemes of decoration.